

## Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 BEIRUT 03807 071520Z  
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W  
-----046628 071544Z /40

O 071407Z JUL 78  
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8606  
INFO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE  
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM  
AMEMBASSY ROME IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV  
USCINCEUR

S E C R E T BEIRUT 3807

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINT, MOPS, LE, SY  
SUBJECT: FIGHTING IN BEIRUT, AND THE VATICAN

REF: (A) ROME 12306, (B) ROME 12325, (C) ROME 12373

1. VATICAN INTERVENTION MAY BE HELPFUL IN BRINGING UNDER CONTROL SITUATION IN BEIRUT, PARTICULARLY INSOFAR AS MARONITES POLITICAL LEADERSHIP IS CONCERNED. HOWEVER, WE BELIEVE THAT TO BE MOST EFFECTIVE VATICAN SHOULD ALSO ENDORSE BASIC LEGITIMACY OF SYRIAN (AND OTHER) ARAB DETERRENT FORCE ROLE IN LEBANON. LEBANESE FRONT LEADERS SHOULD NOT BE GIVEN THE IMPRESSION THAT THE VATICAN TAKES TO HEART THEIR CAUSE WITHOUT POLITICAL RESERVATIONS. WE NOTE THAT POPE'S APPEAL OF JULY 5 (REFTEL B) REFERS TO "SOWING THE SEEDS OF TERROR AMONG THE DEFENSELESS (SIC) POPULATIONS."

2. VATICAN FEAR THAT SYRIANS MAY BE USING ALLEGED PROVOCATIONS AS A PRETEXT TO EXECUTE PRE-EXISTING PLANS

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FOR A TRIPARTITE DIVISION OF LEBANON (REFTEL, PARA 3) IS RATHER SURPRISING. THERE ARE VARIOUS INTERESTS, INCLUDING AT LEAST MAJOR ELEMENTS OF THE LEBANESE FRONT ITSELF, THE ISRAELIS AND PERHAPS EVEN SOME PALESTINIANS, WHO WOULD LIKE TO SEE LEBANON PARTITIONED, BUT SYRIANS HAVE VERY CONSISTENTLY OPPOSED SUCH A "SOLUTION." THE SYRIANS GOT INVOLVED IN LEBANON IN THE

FIRST PLACE LARGELY OUT OF A VERY PROFOUND AND REALISTIC  
FEAR THAT THERE MIGHT OTHERWISE BE PARTITION OF  
LEBANON, WHICH WOULD SOONER OR LATER HAVE FISSIPAROUS  
EFFECTS IN SYRIA ITSELF. SYRIA, LIKE LEBANON, HAS A  
CONSIDERABLY MIXED ASSORTMENT OF CONFESSIONS, INCLUD-  
ING THE ALAWITES (WHO CURRENTLY GOVERN THE COUNTRY),  
GREEK ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS, ASSYRIAN CHRISTIANS AND  
DRUZE. SYRIANS MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN TAKING OVER NORTHERN  
LEBANON, PARTICULARLY PORT OF TRIPOLI, BUT ONLY AS A  
VERY DISTINCTLY SECOND CHOICE CONSOLATION PRIZE IN  
THE EVENT OF COMPLETE FAILURE OF THEIR BASIC PURPOSE HERE.  
THE SYRIANS THEMSELVES ARE AT PRESENT ACCUSING THE LEBANESE  
FRONT OF WORKING TOWARDS PARTITION, AND WE THINK THERE  
IS MUCH MERIT IN THEIR ARGUMENT.  
PARKER

SECRET

NNN

## Message Attributes

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**Concepts:** INTERVENTION, COMBAT OPERATIONS  
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**Decaption Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
**Decaption Note:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
**Disposition Event:**  
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